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REPORT ON JEWS WHO ESCAPED FROM GDR

CLAIMS NUMBER OF ESCAPED JEWS FROM GDR EXAGGERATED -- Tel Aviv, Yedioth Hayom,
 11 Feb 53

J. Rafael, head of the Israeli Immigration Department of the Jewish Agency,
 who recently returned from Europe, declared at a press conference in Jerusalem
 that the recent statements made concerning the number of Jews who escaped from
 the GDR to the German Federal Republic have been exaggerated.

He stated that [since early January 1953] until the beginning of February
 1953, only about 300 Jews had escaped to West Berlin. Some of these Jews, the
 Israeli official added, prefer to remain in the German Federal Republic and
 some of them want to immigrate to Israel and other countries.

Rafael declared further that these Jews claimed to have escaped for fear
 of political discrimination and that they denied that the Jews in the GDR had
 been subjected to personal anti-Semitic attacks. These escaped Jews even de-
 clared, Rafael continued, that several Germans in the GDR had been sentenced be-
 cause of anti-Jewish activities and that Jews were still able to obtain govern-
 ment posts.

RABBI STATES 2,000 JEWS HAVE REMAINED IN EAST BERLIN -- Amsterdam, Nieuw
 Israëlietisch Weekblad, 1 May 53

Peter Levinson, 32-year-old former rabbi of Greater Berlin from 1950 until
 early 1953, recently stated that of the 2,000 Jews who resided in the Soviet
 Zone of Berlin when he lived there, 500 had escaped to the German Federal Re-
 public.

The Rabbi declared further that most of the Jews in East Berlin are mid-
 dle-aged and "feel insecure" and that he had made efforts to help them to es-
 cape to West Berlin. He added: "There is no Jewish life in East Berlin, and
 there are no rabbis."

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Levinson had served as a chaplain in the US Air Force Reserve [no other details given].

INCREASE IN NUMBER OF JEWS ESCAPING FROM THE GDR -- Amsterdam, Nieuw Israelietisch Weekblad, 8 May 53

During the last week of April 1953, the number of Jews who escaped from the GDR to West Berlin has increased, compared with the beginning of the month.

These Jews escaped from the GDR because of recently introduced strong economic restrictions and not because of Soviet anti-Semitic activities.

In March 1953, 80 Jews escaped from the GDR, while during the first part of April 1953, only 23 Jews escaped.

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